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Department of State **TELEGRAM**

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INFO OCT-01 SS-20 NSC-10 NSCE-00 INR-06 CIAE-00 NSAE-00
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AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA CITY
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 1604

LIMDIS

CINCSO FOR POLAD

BOGOTA FOR MEYER

SUBJECT: MITRIONE KIDNAPPING - MEETING WITH VICE PRESIDENT

1. AT SUGGESTION OF FONMIN PEIRANO, I MET FOR ONE HOUR LATE AFTERNOON TODAY (AUGUST 6) WITH VICE PRESIDENT ALBERTO ABDALA. I TOLD VICE PRESIDENT THAT I WAS CALLING UPON HIM AT SUGGESTION OF FONMIN BECAUSE OF DEEP CONCERN WHICH MY GOVERNMENT FEELS OVER FATE OF MITRIONE. I POINTED OUT THIS CONCERN HAS BEEN GREATLY INCREASED IN PAST DAY WITH DELIVERY OF LATEST MLN NOTE AND MIDNIGHT AUGUST 7 DEADLINE WHICH IT CONTAINED. USG NATURALLY SEEKING ALL INFORMATION AVAILABLE AS TO MLN INTENTIONS AND WE PARTICULARLY ANXIOUS TO INSURE THAT CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN GOU AND TERRORISTS REMAIN OPEN AND AVAILABLE FOR USE BY EITHER SIDE AT ANY MOMENT. I ASKED VEEP WHETHER IN VIEW OF HIS LONG POLITICAL EXPERIENCE AND MANY ACQUAINTANCES, HE COULD GIVE ME ANY OPINION ON

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KIDNAPPING SITUATION.

2. THE VICE PRESIDENT REPLIED THAT HE THOUGHT GOVERNMENT COMMUNIQUE OF AUGUST 4 WAS AN ERROR IN THAT IT SEEMED TO CLOSE DOOR TO EFFORTS WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED TO NEGOTIATE OUT OF PRESENT SITUATION. HE SAID FONMINISTER HAD GONE TO SEE PRESIDENT ON AUGUST 4 TO URGE THAT GOU ADOPT MORE OPEN STANCE WHICH WOULD HAVE INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO AT LEAST OPEN DIALOGUE. HOWEVER, SHORTLY AFTER FONMIN ARRIVED AT PRESIDENT'S RESIDENCE, MINISTRY OF INTERIOR ISSUED COMMUNIQUE. ABDALA SAID FONMIN WAS VERY UPSET ABOUT THIS AND HAD ASKED HIM WHETHER HE OUGHT TO RESIGN. VICE PRESIDENT SAID HE HAD COUNSELED PEIRANO NOT TO LEAVE CABINET. AT THIS POINT, VEEP SAID UNEQUIVOCABLY THAT REGARDLESS OF HOW BAD SITUATION NOW LOOKED, THE MLN HAD NO REPEAT NO INTENTION OF MURDERING MITRIONE AND GOMIDES. HE THOUGHT THAT GOMIDES' POSITION WAS MORE DIFFICULT ONE, SINCE IT SUSPECTED THAT HE WAS AGENT OF BRAZILIAN INTELLIGENCE. HE REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES BELIEF THAT MLN INTENDS TO "SENTENCE" KIDNAPPED VICTIMS BY PUBLICIZING ALLEGATIONS OF THEIR "GUILT". HE SAID HE FRANKLY A LITTLE SUSPICIOUS OF MLN'S REPORT OF MITRIONE BEING WOUNDED, SAYING THIS MIGHT BE FORM OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE AGAINST GOU AND USG IN ORDER TO APPLY MORE PRESSURE. MEDICAL DESCRIPTION OF MITRIONE'S WOUND COULD HAVE BEEN FAKED BY MLN DOCTOR. THE VEEP SAID HE WAS NOT, OF COURSE, CONVINCED OF THIS AND HE MUST ALWAYS EXPECT THE WORST, BUT THAT POSSIBILITY HAD AT LEAST OCCURRED TO HIM.

3. AS IF TO LEND CREDENCE TO HIS BELIEF ABOUT MLN'S INTENTIONS, ABDALA SPOKE AT LENGTH ABOUT HIS LONG POLITICAL CAREER AND THE MANY CONTACTS HE HAD AMONG ALL POLITICAL ELEMENTS INCLUDING THE LEFT. HE MENTIONED, AS DID FONMIN, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT COL'S DAUGHTER WAS TUPAMARO. HE ALSO SPOKE VERY STRONGLY ABOUT WHAT HE CONSIDERED OVERALL HARDLINE POSITION OF PRESIDENT PACHECO AND HIS ADVISORS REGARDING URUGUAY'S PROBLEMS. HE REFERRED TO HIMSELF AS MAN OF "LINEA BLANDA" THAT IS, AN ADVOCATE OF POLICIES OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION. POLITICS, HE SAID, IS GAME OF COMPROMISE BUT ATTITUDE OF PRESENT GOVERNMENT HAS SIMPLY CREATED ANIMOSITIES AND ANXIETIES IN AREAS WHERE NONE SHOULD EXIST. HE CLOSED BY SAYING THAT HE WOULD BE TALKING TO FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES THIS EVENING AND TOMORROW AND ASKED WHETHER I WOULD SEND TULL, WHO ACCOMPANIED

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ME, TO HIS OFFICE DURING AFTERNOON OF AUGUST 7 FOR FURTHER CONVERSATIONS, TO WHICH I READILY AGREED.

4. COMMENT: IN ADDITION TO VEEP'S EXPRESSED BELIEF THAT MITRIONE WILL NOT BE HARMED, I RECEIVED FROM VEEP SEVERAL SUBTLE HINTS DURING COURSE OF CONVERSATION THAT HE WOULD BE AVAILABLE AS COMMUNICATION CHANNEL, SHOULD WE NEED ONE. THE VEEP DID NOT, OF COURSE, PUT IT IN THESE BALD TERMS BUT THE IMPLICATION WAS THERE. ALSO INTERESTING TO NOTE APPARENT WORKING RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS APPARENTLY DEVELOPED BETWEEN FONMIN PEIRANO, WHO IS CONSIDERED ALMOST UNIVERSALLY AS AMONG CLOSEST CONFIDENTS OF PRESIDENT PACHECO, AND VEEP WHO HAS PERIODICALLY BEEN AT ODDS WITH PRESIDENT. FINALLY, I THINK WE HAVE SOME INDICATION NOW THAT THERE MAY NOT BE COMPLETE UNITY WITHIN PACHECO CABINET ON GOU POSITION THIS MATTER, ALTHOUGH VEEP'S MIND IS OFTEN MOST INVENTIVE WHEN SEEKING TO BUTTRESS IMAGE OF HIS OWN REASONABILITY VERSUS THE "UNREASONABLENESS" OF OTHERS. I WISH WE COULD SHARE VEEP'S CERTAINTY OVER SAFE RETURN OF MITRIONE BUT UNFORTUNATELY WE CANNOT.

5. I NOW HAVE APPOINTMENT WITH PRESIDENT AT 2200 HOURS LOCAL TONIGHT TO DELIVER TEXT OF PRESIDENT NIXON' MESSAGE CONTAINED IN DEPARTMENT'S 126867. ADAIR

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PER F. Devine
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